AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented method for comparing an unknown string to a predefined string, the method comprising:

identifying a predefined string;

identifying an unknown string for comparison with the predefined string;

performing a bitwise exclusive OR operation ~~on~~ between an ASCII binary representation of at least a segment of the unknown string and an ASCII binary representation of at least a segment of the predefined string; and

identifying a case-insensitive string match between the predefined string and the unknown string ~~based on~~ by applying a predefined flag to a result of the exclusive OR operation to produce an indicator for the case-insensitive string match.

Claim 2 (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising identifying a segment of the predefined string and identifying a segment of the unknown string for comparison with the predefined string.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 2, wherein the segment of the predefined string and the segment of the unknown string contain a ~~the~~ same number of characters.

Claim 4 (Original): The method of claim 2, further including left-shifting the binary representation of the segments if the segments contain less than four characters.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of claim 2, wherein identifying a case-insensitive string match includes identifying a case-insensitive segment match based on the exclusive OR operation.

Claim 6 (Cancelled).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 16, wherein the predefined flag is 0x20202020.

Claim 8 (Original): The method of claim 5, further comprising identifying a subsequent segment of the predefined string and a subsequent segment of the unknown string for comparison.

Claim 9-10 (Cancelled).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 91, wherein the predefined flag is zero.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 91, wherein the predefined flag is 0x20.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 91, wherein the predefined flag is 0x20202020.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein ~~each of~~ the segments of the unknown string and the segment of the predefined string each include one character.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein ~~each of~~ the segments of the unknown string and the segment of the predefined string each include four characters.

Claim 16 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the unknown string includes an HTTP header field.

Claim 18 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein identifying a case-insensitive match further includes performing another bitwise operation.

Claim 19 (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising identifying the length of the strings.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 19, wherein the lengths of each of the strings are equal ~~is the same number of characters~~.

Claim 21 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the computer-implemented method is used over a WAN.

Claim 22 (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising determining if characters of the strings are within a predefined ASCII range.

Claim 23 (Original): The method of claim 22, wherein characters not within the predefined ASCII range caused the method to yield a negative string match.

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): A method of case-insensitive string matching for use in a computer network, the method comprising comparing a predefined string to an unknown string by performing at least one bitwise exclusive OR operation ~~on~~ between characters of the predefined string and the corresponding characters of the unknown string, and identifying a case-insensitive string match by performing a bitwise AND operation between a ~~based upon~~ results of the bitwise operation and a predetermined flag to produce a single bit output that indicates whether a case-insensitive match exists between the predefined string and the unknown string ~~(s), wherein the bitwise operation(s) includes at least one exclusive OR operation~~.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A computer networking device for improving data transfer via a computer network, the device comprising a processor configured to compare a client HTTP header with a known HTTP header by performing a bitwise exclusive OR operation on ~~the~~ binary representations of the headers, wherein ~~an~~ case-insensitive HTTP header match is identified by performing a bitwise AND operation between a result of ~~based on~~ the exclusive OR operation and a predetermined flag.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): An article of manufacture comprising a storage medium having a plurality of machine-readable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by a computing system, the instructions providing for:

identifying a predefined string;

identifying an unknown string for comparison with the predefined string;

performing a bitwise exclusive OR operation on the unknown string and the predefined string; and

identifying a case-insensitive string match between the predefined string and the unknown string ~~based on~~ by applying a predetermined flag to a result of the exclusive OR operation to produce an indicator for the case-insensitive string match.